

Gateway to Permaculture Workbook

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Introduction

Permaculture often starts with a bit of confusion and curiosity. What exactly is permaculture, and how do you implement it? The purpose of this workbook is to answer those questions.

This workbook will help you understand the principles behind permaculture and how to apply them through design. It is designed as a starting point and will help you develop a foundation of principles and design skills. After this workbook, this foundation will help you as you continue to learn and try new things.



Dig In

Throughout the course, look for activities to help you start applying the course material. This workbook encourages you to learn by doing.



Resources

Foundation material in this book comes from the experience of the author and the books:

- Permaculture: Principles & Pathways Beyond Sustainability by David Holmgren
- Permaculture: A Designers' Manual by Bill Mollison
- Introduction to Permaculture by Bill Mollison
- Gaia's Garden by Toby Hemenway

What is Permaculture?

Permaculture is a term that was coined by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren in 1978, combining the terms “permanent” and “culture.” The idea behind permaculture is to create a culture that can continue permanently. Permaculture invites us to consider how we can do better in caring for ourselves and the world we live in. Also termed ecological gardening, permaculture focuses on our connection to the natural world and how you can work with nature to provide for your needs.

Permaculture mimics the patterns and relationships in nature to create positive solutions. These solutions are responsive and resilient to the constant change that is inherent in the natural world. Permaculture will help you develop a set of tools modeled after nature, creating a framework for design that is inclusive of humans and caring for the natural world. Natural elements are interconnected to create abundance. As you optimize natural processes, you also facilitate healthy and abundant land and people.

Permaculture focuses on methods for designing our landscapes that are rooted in ethics and principles. Through studying permaculture, you can gain a framework for making decisions that will support your values and the needs of the environment. These design decisions are focused on responding to individual situations and local environments, not repeating the same solutions.

The foundation of permaculture is rooted in finding positive solutions to the problems we face. You can focus on what you can do, even if it is small-scaled changes. Permaculture works from the ground up, seeking to invite change through individual decisions and change.

A design method to...



Find solutions from nature



Respond to the local environment



Care for the earth and people



Create change beginning in the garden



Dig In

Key Terms

- Permaculture
- Ecological gardening
- Agroecology
- Homesteading (urban)
- Natural farming, Regenerative agriculture
- Food forest

People

- Bill Mollison
- Brad Lancaster
- David Holmgren
- Geoff Lawton
- Ruth Stout
- Sepp Holzer

Websites

- Permaculture News: <https://www.permaculturenews.org/>
- Permies: <https://permies.com/>
- Discover Permaculture: <https://www.discoverpermaculture.com/>



- *Permaculture: Principles & Pathways Beyond Sustainability* by David Holmgren
- *Permaculture: A Designers' Manual* by Bill Mollison
- *Introduction to Permaculture* by Bill Mollison
- *Gaia's Garden* by Tony Hemenway
- *Practical Permaculture: for Home Landscapes, Your Community, and the Whole Earth* by Jessi Bloom, Dave Boehnlein

Another great resource is local people who are engaged in permaculture. Groups on social media platforms can help you connect with people in your area.

Write down notes as you look at examples.

[illegible]

Location

Permaculture should be richly grounded within a specific place and context. Each location will have unique challenges and environments which leads to unique design and solutions. To show how permaculture is grounded in context, a real-world location and design will be used as an example in this workbook. This example design will help show how the principles and methods of permaculture respond to the unique circumstances in this location.

The example design is the property and home historically owned by the Maxwells. The Maxwell residence was built in the '90s in the mountain regions of Utah and has recently began renovation. Some of the design elements discussed in this workbook are existing, but much of the design has yet to be implemented. The home was built on a naturally occurring spring that feeds into the local water system. It is a self-build home and has always focused on utilizing local, natural resources. The design focus will be on abundantly providing for human needs in a way that also cares for the world.

Currently, a young family resides in the home. They have elementary-school-aged children and hope to reside there indefinitely. They value time with family and time spent outdoors, enjoying nature. This design will be different than your own. The examples shown are meant to illustrate the design process, and inspire you to creatively design your own location.



Additional Resources

This course provides an overview of permaculture principles but does not provide specifics on the landscape design process. If you would like to learn more about landscape design, the course Design 4 Everyone through USU Extension offers an excellent step-by-step guide for landscape design. See: <https://extensioncourses.usu.edu/product/design-4-everyone/>

Location

The Maxwell Residence



Overhead Image




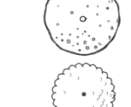
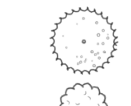
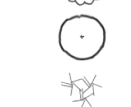

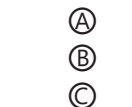



Home View



This is the final design for the Maxwell Residence. The workbook will provide an overview of the principles behind this design, and the process that was used to create it.

Plant Key

-  Large shade tree
-  Deciduous tree
-  Evergreen tree
-  Fruit tree
-  Large shrub
-  Fruiting shrub
-  Perennial
-  Groundcovers
-  Annual crops

Legend

- (A) Native trees and shrubs
- (B) Food forest
- (C) Main crop garden
- (D) Meadow mix lawn
- (E) Pastures
- (F) Pond
- (G) Stream
- (H) Wildlife corridor
- (I) Rain garden
- (J) Deck
- (K) Raised beds
- (L) Solar panels
- (M) Shed and sandbox
- (N) Archery range
- (O) Water tank
- (P) Canvas tent, shower
- (Q) Greenhouse
- (R) Ducks
- (S) Animal pen
- (T) High tunnel
- (U) Produce stand
- (V) Play area
- (W) Fire pit

Maxwell Residence

Design by
Liz Braithwaite

Start Designing

Dig in

Bring your own landscape or design work to this course. When you are working through this course, use this design to help you learn the concepts. Starting to practice design early will help you understand how these principles apply through multiple situations. As you strive to implement what you are learning in your own unique situation, the concepts will gain greater depth. Start sketching some ideas below. *Think of this as a pre-test to see where you are.* It isn't meant to be a completed design, but simply a way to start brainstorming and exploring design ideas.